

# Cable customers receiving new stations

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Two new television channels have begun to appear on base cable television systems in the United Kingdom. The new channels, Newsports and Spectrum, are programmed by the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service Broadcast Center in Los Angeles, and are meant to compliment the Armed Forces Network channel which is programmed and distributed from AFN headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany.

As the name implies, Newsports is a 24-hour news and sports channel, which broadcasts a mix of programming from stateside news and sports networks. Spectrum broadcasts recent movies, sitcoms, light drama and other family entertainment. AFN will continue to broadcast a mix of news, sports and general entertainment programming. As much as possible, program engineers are trying to avoid duplication of programming among the channels, to offer viewers the greatest possible choice.

The new channels are being offered as part of the basic subscriber packages sold on each of the bases. At RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath, the basic package costs \$18 per month, and includes a good selection of other channels, British and American. Customers may also purchase some premium service packages that offer more movie and sports channels at a higher price.

## Schedules

Television schedules for the three military channels appear each day in Stars and Stripes. The newspaper also provides a program schedule for a fourth channel, SATNET, which is a time-shifted feed of other programming from the United States. Currently, planners do not intend to air SATNET in the United Kingdom, because much of the programming duplicates what is already being shown on the other channels and cable system capacities are limited.

The additional channels are part of an Armed Forces Information Service initia-

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tive, dubbed AFRTS '97, to convert its satellite feeds from analog to digital. The conversion allows program engineers to compress the signals, and free up extra bandwidth to allow the broadcast center to add the new channels.

## Digital radio

Digital compression also allows program engineers to begin offering a digital radio service to some locations, with up to 10 channels of radio programming originating from the U.S. and AFN Power Radio from Frankfurt. The contractor is exploring possible ways to provide this service to its customers, and hopes to have a technical solution available in the near future.

Military television system engineers at RAF Feltwell recently went through and upgraded AFRTS cable head-end locations to receive the digital feeds at RAF Mildenhall, RAF Lakenheath, RAF Feltwell and nearby military family housing areas at Studlands Park, Lakenheath Village and Shepherd's Grove. The remaining equipment needed to complete the upgrade at other U.S. Air Forces in Europe operating locations in the United Kingdom arrived earlier this week, and will be installed over the next several weeks.

Current subscribers to base television cable systems, which are administered through a franchise agreement between Cablecom and 3rd Air Force, should have received a recent mailing from the contractor indicating where to find the channels on their set. The new channels are being added at no additional cost to subscribers.

Most military family housing and dormitory residents already receive AFN free through a special arrangement with the contractor to provide this channel and four British channels free to military customers in their service area.

However, the contractor is under no obligation to provide the additional military channels for free, and so a deal was worked out between the contractor and the government to allow him to put the extra channels on the lowest price tier of their subscription services.

## Multi-system TVs

Subscribers should understand they need to have a multi-system television to view all the channels, since the military channels are broadcast in NTSC (the American broadcast standard) and the other channels are broadcast in PAL (the British standard). Anyone using a television set in the United Kingdom also needs to maintain a current British television license, available through British post offices.

Military people living in the Cambridge and Newmarket areas serviced by Cambridge Cable can't receive the new channels but, can receive AFN if they show their identification card to the company's customer service office and receive authorization from base public affairs offices. The channel is available to military customers only, as part of their basic service package. The company is still trying to decide if they have a financial interest in expanding their service menu to include the new military channels.

For on base and military family housing area subscriber information, contact Cablecom Customer Service at (01638) 532323. For general details about AFRTS '97, contact the 3rd Air Force Public Affairs Office at (01638) 542252 or DSN 238-2252.

## The numbers behind DUIs

There were 35 DUI convictions involving 48th Fighter Wing military personnel, civilians and family members during 1996.

Airmen basic through technical sergeant were 84 percent more likely to be involved in DUI offenses, but this didn't preclude senior NCOs, officers, civilians or family members from being involved.

The average revocation of driving privileges was 16 months.

A total of £10,165 was paid in fines and court costs. That's

more than \$16,000.

There were 10 DUI arrests during the 101 Critical Days of Summer, all resulting in convictions.

One military member was discharged as a result of his conviction.

Twelve Articles 15 were issued as a result of on-base DUIs. Twenty-one letters of reprimand were also issued resulting in unfavorable information files and placement on control rosters.

Eighty six percent of the DUIs occurred between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m.

(Courtesy of the 48th Security Forces Squadron)